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grossness: and that it is not a fastidious delicacy, but a proper respect for decency and propriety, that, to use the simile adduced at the conclusion of T's letter, would prevent the unnecessary exposure of "a beautiful infant sprawling naked on the floor," before a mixed assemblage of youth of both sexes. There would certainly be a want of decency and delicacy in the practice, and an author may bring forward the best principles of our nature, without any mixture of that indelicacy which must detract from the value of the other parts of his writings, and is a legitimate object for criticism and censure. A good way to judge of the delicacy of wit is, to examine if it is fit to be read in a mixed company of both sexes. I cannot allow that goodness of intention excuses writing in such a manner, as to injure the modesty of youth, which is a most excellent preservative against the allurements of vice. If this fence is broken in upon, by whatever means, or by wit however subtle, the security of the youthful mind within the inclosure of virtue is lessened.

In estimating the character of Sterne, and other deceased authors, it is well to doubt of the unqualified admission of the old maxim "*de mortuis nil nisi bonum*—say nothing but good of the dead." The Edinburgh Reviewers have lately amended this sentence with evident improvement—"Benefaction to the living, rather than superstition towards the dead."

I am accused of *un* Irish gallantry, because I do not praise Irish female writers, whether I think them deserving of it or not. I endeavour to guard against nationality, and am desirous neither to give praise to any character: because they are Irish, nor to withhold it from those who justly merit it, whether they are born in this island or in any other part of the world. Nationality, or a blind attachment to country, often leads us to commit the double injustice of despising others, and awarding more than the due meed of praise to our own.

A READER.

To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.

IN your last number I was astonished to find that T. in his "Observations

on the remarks on Sterne," accuses the "Lover of Simplicity of Character" of want of candour; I am not conscious that I was uncandid, but I think that the cause of morality requires that Sterne's writings should be censured, and that Tristram Shandy and the Sentimental Journey should be banished from all well selected libraries. The anecdotes related by the "Reader" and first published in the "Monthly Repository of Theology and General Literature," were never contradicted by any writer in that publication, which I consider a proof of their authenticity and of the good sense of the English; but I am sorry to say that the Irish taste is not quite so correct: any person who dares to say that Sterne's writings are immoral is contradicted with the greatest bitterness.

I cannot agree with T. in thinking that the "Reader" is unpolite to the Irish ladies, although I am as much attached to the Irish character as T. can possibly be. The "Reader" expresses his high respect for the female sex, and points out some excellent moral writings by English ladies, whose works will be read when Sterne will be forgotten, and sunk into merited oblivion.

It is a true friend who points out errors, and endeavours to correct our taste.

The charge against Sterne's writings is for immorality and indelicacy; I am not such a wild enthusiast as to expect to make converts to my opinion. We have a right to avow our sentiments, and although T. defends Sterne and almost loses his temper to think that his Idol is attacked, yet he has the candour to admit the charge of indelicacy. After his candid concession I am unwilling to carry this controversy farther, and must take my leave of T. by thanking him for the high compliments he pays the female sex, and hoping when he next appears in your pages he will amicably allow others to differ in opinion.

A Lover of Simplicity of character.

To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.

SIR,

"TO catch the manners living as they rise," is the office of a